

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I praise God, the Almighty for His faithfulness and unfailing mercy throughout this journey of my life, the dream of Ph. D would have never come true without His guidance and blessings.

I am overwhelmed to avail this rare opportunity to extend my sense of gratitude and regard to my supervisor Prof. S. C. Deka, Department of Food Engineering & Technology, Tezpur University for his inestimable and perspicacious guidance, authentic suggestion with constructive critics time throughout the course of investigation and preparation of thesis.

I express my deepest gratitude and veneration to esteemed members of my Doctoral Committee Prof C. L. Mahanta, Department of Food Engineering & Technology and Dr. M. Mandal, Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology, Tezpur University.

Sincere regards to Prof. M. K. Chaudhuri, Vice-Chancellor, Tezpur University, Prof. D. K. Bhattacharya, Dean, School of Engineering and Dr. M. K. Hazarika, Head, Department of Food Engineering & Technology for providing necessary facilities to carry out the research work.

With a sense of gratitude and great pleasure, I acknowledge the whole hearted cooperation extended by my Associate Supervisor Dr. K. K. Dash, Assistant Professor, Department of Food Engineering and Technology for sparing his valuable time and constant support particularly in the drying characteristics and optimization of process parameters (Chapter 6) during my course of investigation. I gratefully acknowledge Prof. S.K. Duloi, Department of Chemical Science, Tezpur University for helping me out in doing my experiments in his lab.

I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to my Departmental Research Committee for their valuable suggestion and encouragement.

I take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge the Defence Research Organization, Ministry of Defence (DRDO), Government of India, New Delhi for providing financial assistance in the form of Junior Research Fellowship which buttressed me to complete my work smoothly. I also express my sincere gratitude to SAIF, NEHU, Shillong, NMR Research Centre, IISC Bangalore, DTU, New Delhi, Thermo Fisher Technical Centre, Mumbai, Department of Chemical Science and SAIC

Tezpur University. Most of the results described in the thesis would have not been obtained without their help.

Thanks are also due to faculty and staff of Department of Food Engineering & Technology for their assistance and cooperation from time to time throughout the period of my research. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mukesh Saikia, Librarian, Tezpur University for all his help during my thesis preparation.

I am fortunate to gratefully acknowledge Mrs. Nijara Deka, her love and motherly caring attitude toward me throughout this journey is boundless.

I am indebted to my husband Nikin's unconditional love, support, his effort of holding my shattered pieces emotionally when the tasks seemed arduous and insurmountable, just want to say thank you for being there. I would like to pay high regards and thank profusely to my loving parents and in-laws for their support, encouragement and inspiration throughout my research period and lifting me uphill this phase of life. Words cannot express how grateful I am to them for all of the sacrifices that they have made on my behalf.

Words are not enough to express my deep sense of gratitude to my bosom friend Arup for all his support. A journey is easier when we travel together, Duyi, I would never forget your support and sisterly love. You guys have always been by my side during the happy and hard moments to push me and motivate me. I convey my special acknowledgement to my lab mates Jayabrata, Gitashree, Salai, Khursida, Yesmin, Pankaj and entire research scholars and juniors of FET for all the help rendered by you all. It is my pleasure to acknowledge Ranjana and her husband Dr. Jay singh for everything that you guys have done for me, Thank you.

*Tezpur
November, 2015*

(Prerna Khawas)